B.O.A.C. Plans and Reorganization .....

until the recent announcement regarding the purchase of Canadairs because they had no definite basis upon which to plan. Now there would be no more apologies, and the Corporation would go out and get business. "The last year has been very unsettling for everybody," he said. "Where we have fallen down is on the aircraft equipment. It is one thing to fly an uneconomic aircraft so long as the aircraft is filled with passengers, but if you fly an uneconomic aircraft empty, then you are in serious trouble. I regret to say that is what was beginning to happen." Mr. Whitney Straight continued: "In the Corporation we regret very much we have had to go outside the British aircraft industry on this occasion. We would rather fly British than anything else, but we have got to keep British airlines flying throughout the world, and I regret that in the short-term view there is no other solution." In the Courtney Committee report on the Tudor II it was suggested that B.O.A.C. should lower its safety standards to fly these aircraft. Mr. Whitney Straight stated most emphatically: "Whatever Air Chief Marshal Courtney or anyone else may suggest or wish, B.O.A.C. will not lower its standards."

Without new aircraft there was a risk that the D.H.106s and Bristol 175s would have become available with no Corporation with sufficient experience or scope to operate them. The decision to buy Canadairs to supplement the Constellations and Stratocruisers gave an opportunity for competitive airline operation, and a chance to B.O.A.C. to become good operators.

Regarding individual aircraft, present and future, for the Corporation fleet, Mr. Whitney Straight made the following remarks:—

The 1950 Fleet

By 1950 B.O.A.C. should be operating a landplane fleet consisting of six Stratocruisers, 11 Constellations, 22 Canadairs, 25 Hermes IVs and 15 Tudor IVB freighters.

Stratocruisers: These aircraft were regarded as a great step forward in air transport design, but delivery date was still unknown. In spite of fears regarding handling in view of the high wing loading, practical experience had now shown that the Stratocruisers handle as well as the Constellations. Bunks could be fitted in the forward compartments if there was found to be a demand for them.

Constellations: The newly acquired Constellations would be put into service on the Australia route starting in September and reaching planned frequency by December.

Canadair IV: This aircraft, developed by the Canadian company, was basically a D.C.4 with British Rolls-Royce engines. The pressurization and refrigeration systems and divided internal layout were up to D.C.6 standard, but fuselage length was the same as of the Skymaster. An improved D.C.6 undercarriage was fitted. The Merlin power plants had proved very satisfactory, but development must continue and more was hoped for. The Canadair IV was an economic aircraft of the right size for the Empire routes, and the Corporation was very satisfied with it in that role.

Hermes IV: B.O.A.C. were confident that Hermes IVs would be first-class short-range aircraft. The first one was scheduled for delivery in January, but this might be optimistic in view of the fact that none of this mark had yet flown. They were not expected to be in operation before the beginning of 1950, although rate of delivery was scheduled for four per month during 1949. There was little operational experience with the Hercules engines, for the Hermes performance was based on 2,200 h.p. for take-off and the Hercules now operating in the Hastings gave only 1,675 h.p. The improvements planned for the Hermes VI—a later version of the IV—which included wing, flap and other modifications, were not likely to be incorporated in any of the 25 IVs now ordered.

Tudors: The Tudor problem was settled and the past should remain unstirred, but there was much to be done in the future. Tudor IIs had failed to meet the basic Empire requirement, and this was nothing whatever to do with seats or equipment; the bare aircraft had failed. B.O.A.C. did not want to see wastage and felt they had a certain responsibility with regard to Tudors. Fifteen Tudor IVBs would therefore be taken for operation as pressurized freighters. The IVB was an Avro/B.O.A.C. development based on the most improved Tudor mark. The conversion was quite simple, entailing a strengthened floor, large doors and cargo handling attachments. There was a definite demand for a pressurized freighter for the carriage of livestock, bottles and other articles which might be detrimentally affected by altitude. The Corporation thought there was a chance of offering a unique service in the freight market and they would "really go for it" with a view to starting a new era with the world's biggest freighter fleet. The carriage of post, parcels and second-class mail was also in mind. Crew training was also being considered, and experienced ex-R.A.F. pilots were running out. A freighter service offered excellent opportunities for pilots to gain experience.

Solents: The Solent would continue to operate until 1950, and, if self-supporting, perhaps longer. The South Africa route was a special case and was commercially attractive when operated with Solent aircraft along air tour lines. Arrangements were, incidentally, being discussed with B.S.A.A. with a view to making B.O.A.C. flying boat experience available to them later in preparation for S.R.45 operation.

Future Types

D.H. 106 Comet: Mr. Whitney Straight described the Comet as the "Great White Hope" of British commercial aviation. B.O.A.C. maintenance engineers had been with the de Havil-

"Flight" photograph.

ADOPTED: The Canadair Four, a 40-passenger pressurized transport which, with its four Rolls Royce Merlin 624 power plants (1,760 h.p. each) is claimed by the makers (Canadair Ltd., of Montreal) to cruise at speeds up to 345 m.p.h. The all-up weight is 82,000 lb. Alternative power plants, as in the Avro Tudor, might be Bristol Hercules sleeve-valve radials. Lord Pakenham's announcement that B.O.A.C. have been authorized to purchase 22 Canadair Fours is discussed on page 136.